

"Melissa! Are you packed and ready to go?" Mother called down the hallway. "Yes, I am, Mother. I can't wait to get on the plane. I've packed plenty of blue jeans and I even borrowed some cowboy boots from Susan to take with me," replied Melissa.

Thirty minutes later, Melissa was on the airplane soaring above New York City. As she watched, the tops of tall skyscrapers disappeared from view, and her mind began to drift to the mountains in Montana.

Grandma and Grandfather lived on a small ranch near Great Falls. The whole piece of land was actually only ten acres, but to Melissa, who lived in an apartment with her mother, it was as big as Central Park!

Grandfather had five horses that he and Grandma loved to ride on the ranch. Melissa's favorite horse was Lady Skylark, the graceful, honey-colored mare. She had not been to visit her grandparents since last Christmas, so she worried that Lady Skylark might have forgotten her. Melissa decided to take some sugar cubes and an apple immediately upon arrival to renew her friendship with her favorite horse.

As she stepped off the plane, she spied the snow-white hair of Grandfather in the crowd and rushed down the ramp to his welcoming arms. Grandma was waiting outside with the car engine running, and she whisked them home to the ranch.

They pulled into the long driveway, and at the top of the hill was the red brick house, just as Melissa had remembered it. She unpacked her clothes and put on blue jeans, a white cotton shirt, and cowboy boots. Grandfather was impressed with her outfit. "I'm glad you

thought to bring boots," he said, "because Grandma and I planned to take you on a picnic for lunch. Of course that will include a trail ride."

"May I ride Lady Skylark, Grandfather?" asked Melissa. "If she'll let you," he replied. "She may not remember you."

Melissa was crestfallen. Grandma tried to cheer her up by asking her to help pack lunch. Melissa slowly wrapped the sandwiches in plastic wrap while Grandma packed fruit and crackers.

As Melissa walked to the barn, she noticed that Grandfather had saddled the horses. Lady Skylark was standing impatiently, whisking flies with her tail. Melissa held out her hand. In it she had three sugar cubes. At first, Lady Skylark did not pay her any attention. Then, she slowly sniffed at her hand and finally ate the sugar cubes. She finished her treat by licking Melissa's hand clean!

Melissa was overjoyed. She knew she had won her friend back. "I think this will be the best vacation ever!" she said, smiling at her grandparents.

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